

Message Text

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PAGE 01 WELLIN 01467 130506Z

15

ACTION EA-13

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R 130330Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8037

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMCONSUL MELBOURNE

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

C O N F I D E N T I A L WELLINGTON 1467

LIMDIS

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, VS, NZ

SUBJECT: TRAN QUOC BUU VISIT TO NEW ZEALAND

REF: (A) SAIGON 5509 (B) SAIGON 5919 (NOTAL)

(C) WELLINGTON 1304

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: THE APRIL 21-25 NEW ZEALAND VISIT OF CVT PRESIDENT TRAN QUOC BUU SPARKED A LARGE AMOUNT OF LEFT VERSUS RIGHT BICKERING WITHIN THE FOL. BUU MET WITH PM KIRK TO DISCUSS AFFILIATION OF THE CONG NONG PARTY TO THE ASIAN PACIFIC SOCIALIST ORGANIZATION. ON BALANCE THE VISIT WAS A SUCCESS. END SUMMARY.

2. THE BUU VISIT WENT LITTLE NOTICED BY NZ LABOR PARTY BUT WAS MAJOR ISSUE WITHIN FEDERATION OF ALBOR (FOL). BUU MET PM KIRK APRIL 22. THIS WAS UNEXPECTED DUE KIRK'S HEALTH PROBLEMS. MEETING WAS ATTENDED ONLY BY KIRK, BUTT AND DAT. BUU'S COMMENTS TO LABATT WERE BASICALLY SAME AS THOSE CONTAINED IN DAT'S LETTER (REFTEL B).

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PAGE 02 WELLIN 01467 130506Z

PRESS PICKED UP STORY NOT FROM LEAK, BUT AS RESULT TOO

MUCH INDISCREET CROWING BY BUU'S FOL FRIENDS. BUU WAS INTERVIEWED BY NZBC TV ON ARRIVAL. NEWSPAPER ARTICLES CENTERED AROUND ISSUE OF PRO AND ANTI BUU FORCES IN FOL. ARTICLES WERE GENERALLY FAVORABLE.

3. DAT'S DESCRIPTION OF WELLINGTON TRADES COUNCIL MEETING SOMEWHAT EXAGGERATED. DAY BEFORE MEETING COMMUNISTS DID, IN FACT, THREATEN WALKOUT. HOWEVER, TOBY HILL, PRESIDENT OF COUNCIL, TOOK FIRM STAND BEFORE AND DURING MEETING AND SUCCEEDED IN AVOIDING CONFRONTATION. PRIOR TO MEETING COMMUNISTS DISTRIBUTED LEAFLETS LISTING NUMBER OF QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED BUU. ATTEMPTS TO POSE QUESTIONS WERE QUASHED BY HILL WHO HELD THAT POLITICAL ISSUES HAD NO PLACE AT COUNCIL MEETING. MEETING CLOSED WITHOUT INCIDENT.

4. BUU VISIT WAS SUBJECT OF MAJOR DEBATE MAY 7 DURING FOR ANNUAL CONFERENCE. ISSUE WAS RAISED IN CONNECTION WITH AGENDA ITEM CONCERNING ICFTU. FOL LEFT WING TOOK POSITION FOL SHOULD GET OUT OF ICFTU BECAUSE OF PRESENCE THERE OF "UNDEMOCRATIC, GOVERNMENT SPONSORED UNIONS." CVT WAS CITED AS PRIMARY EXAMPLE OF THIS TYPE OF UNION.

BUU AND CVT ABLY DEFENDED BY MODERATOR ON CONFERENCE FLOOR AND FROM CHAIR BY FOL PRESIDENT SKINNER. FINAL VOTE WAS TO ACCEPT WITHOUT CHANGE FOL SECRETARY'S REPORT ON ICFTU.

5. COMMENT - LABOR PARTY IN GENERAL, AND PM KIRK IN PARTICULAR, SUPPORT AND WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT BUU AND CVT. COMMUNIST ELEMENTS WITHIN FOL WILL DO THEIR BEST KEEP ISSUE ALIVE, BUT IMPETUS FOR MAJOR EFFORT HAS DISAPPEARED WITH BUU'S DEPARTURE AND END OF FOL CONFERENCE. CVT VISITS TO NEW ZEALAND DURING FORESEEABLE FUTURE CAN EXPECT TO RECEIVE SAME GENERAL TREATMENT ACCORDED BUU AND DAT. FOL MODERATES ARE GENUINELY INTERESTED IN PROBLEMS OF WORKING PEOPLE OF VIETNAM AND WILL WELCOME VISITS. FOL LEFT, HOWEVER, WILL DO WHAT IT CAN TO DISRUPT VISITS. STRENGTH OF LEFT WAS ADEQUATELY DEMONSTRATED IN ELECTIONS FOR FOL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL.
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PAGE 03 WELLIN 01467 130506Z

THOUGH FAILING TO GET THEMSELVES ELECTED, ONE COMMUNIST AND ONE COMMUNIST SUPPORTED CANDIDATE RECEIVED 217 AND 214 VOTES RESPECTIVELY OUT OF POSSIBLE.
538.
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Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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